

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Committee on Small Business:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 22, 1996.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker, House of Representatives, Capitol Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This letter serves as my formal resignation from the House Committee on Small Business. This resignation is effective as of the date of this letter.

Sincerely,

BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 408) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

HOUSE RESOLUTION 408

Resolved, That the following named Members be, and, that they are hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

To the Committee on the Budget, Sander Levin of Michigan; Bennie Thompson of Mississippi; to the Committee on Commerce, Eliot Engel of New York; to the Committee on Small Business, Jesse Jackson, Jr. of Illinois; Juanita Millender-McDonald of California; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Juanita Millender-McDonald of California.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid of the table.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT ON EARTH DAY

(Mr. GOSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have with me a group of outstanding high school students from southwest Florida. They are participating in a unique congressional classroom program designed to examine the role of Government. Today—Earth Day—we are heading to Roosevelt Island, a living monument to a President who defined the proper role of Government in conservation. In 1907, Teddy Roosevelt said:

To waste, to destroy our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children

the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed.

These stirring words ring just as true today. I hope all Americans will join in honoring the legacy of Teddy Roosevelt, reflecting upon the importance of careful stewardship of our planet.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a partisan matter, this is not a matter of extremism. This is a matter of good sense and good will that all Americans will share in.

PRESIDENT CLINTON IS APPOINTING JUDGES WHO AGREE WITH HIS VIEW OF SOCIAL AND JUDICIAL LIBERALISM

(Mr. BAKER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BAKER of California. Mr. Speaker, the philosophy of the 1960's was to "do your own thing" and to ignore the consequences. This philosophy has crept into almost every institution in American life, including the law. Instead of dispensing justice, jurisprudence today seems more like a competition to see which judge or lawyer can come up with the most unusual or creative way to let criminals off the hook.

Perhaps the clearest evidence of this is Bill Clinton's appointments to the Federal bench. District Judge Harold Baer, Circuit Judge Rosemary Barkett, and District Judge Leonie Brinkema—just to name a few. All of these judges, Mr. Speaker, have devised new and interesting ways to excuse blatant criminal behavior, including armed robbery, drug dealing, and murder.

Bill Clinton's record is clear. As a product of the touchy-feely 1960's, he is willing to excuse criminal activity and is now appointing judges who agree with his view of social judicial liberalism.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Member will be recognized for 5 minutes.

A POSITIVE SIGN FOR JUSTICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, at the end of last week we learned of a breakthrough in a long stalemate between approximately 8,000 American hemophiliacs infected with HIV and the manufacturers of blood-clotting products that led to the hemophiliacs' infection. News reports indicate a settlement offer of \$600 million if certain conditions are met. This is certainly a welcome development after years of fingerpointing

and frustrated court proceedings. As I have said many times, it is time the victims of this tragedy in the United States achieved some closure in this case. It is my strong hope that this settlement proposal will lead to a concrete result for the victims and their families. These folks have suffered since the early 1980's with the knowledge that a product they relied on to improve their quality of life actually carried the virus that causes deadly AIDS. For many years, people in the hemophilia community have charged that more could have been done to make those products safe. While recognizing that hindsight is always crystal clear, many experts have concluded that efforts to develop and market safer products sooner were not given a high priority in the face of powerful incentives to preserve the status quo.

Mr. Speaker, as Members know, I have sponsored legislation to provide compassionate assistance to these victims from the Government. It is my conclusion—and one reached by a distinguished panel of objective experts from the Institute of Medicine [IOM] at the National Academy of Sciences—that Government shares responsibility for this tragedy. The IOM panel outlined the failure of the regulatory system to recognize and respond to the early warning signs of blood-borne AIDS. According to the IOM report, the system "Did not deal well with contemporaneous blood safety issues such as hepatitis and was not prepared to deal with the far greater challenge of AIDS." Citing the extent to which Government officials lacked independent analysis of scientific information or a strong interest in encouraging development of techniques to make blood products safer, the IOM report found "a failure of leadership and inadequate institutional decision-making processes," which led Federal officials to "consistently [choose] the least aggressive option that was justifiable." The IOM found that the Government "did not adequately use its regulatory authority and therefore missed opportunities to protect the public health." As part of its concluding recommendations for changes in the system to prevent this type of crisis from recurring, the IOM panel suggested a compensation program involving the government—one similar to that which exists for vaccines. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is what I and 224 of my bipartisan colleagues in this House—and Senator DEWINE and four of his colleagues in the other body—have sought to do with the Ricky Ray Hemophilia Relief Fund Act. This legislation is based on the premise that Government has a unique responsibility for regulating the safety of blood products and that Government failed to live up to that responsibility during the 1980s. We have not changed our view on that point, even in light of last week's welcome news about a potential settlement between the product manufacturers and the victims. It was